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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EU](#) [PO](#)

SUBJECT: PORTUGAL'S VIEWS ON FEBRUARY EU FOREIGN MINISTERS'  
MEETING (GAERC)

REF: A. STATE 13840

[B](#). STATE 16453

[C](#). LISBON 356

Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Pol-Econ Officer, Embassy Lisbon  
Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#). (U) On February 8, MFA Deputy EU Correspondent Ana Filomena Rocha responded to the Ref A demarche points by offering Portugal's views on the Balkans, Middle East, and African policies.

[2](#). (C) BALKANS - Rocha saw this as the most important area for discussion since it would be the first opportunity for the foreign ministers to respond to Ahtisaari's report. Portugal recognizes that many member states have reservations about the draft agreement, but believes it is better to move forward with Ahtisaari's proposals rather than wait for the perfect final agreement. Regarding Serbia, Portugal continues to push for speedy reform, and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

[3](#). (C) ISRAEL - Since the Mecca discussions were still underway at the time of the demarche, Rocha could only speculate on Portugal's response. Nevertheless, she opined that EU would likely be divided over whether to engage with the new coalition government if it accepted some, but not all, of the three conditions required by the international community cited in Ref B. She speculated that Portugal would probably be willing to support EU dialogue with the Palestinians even without a commitment to all three conditions as a sign of EU flexibility. (NOTE: Now that we have a concrete readout of the negotiations, we will approach the MFA for its official position on this matter. End note.)

[4](#). (C) IRAN - Portugal supports Germany's approach to separate the nuclear issue from other political concerns and would like to work with civil society to improve the human rights situation in Iran. However, Rocha was pessimistic that Iran would be willing to treat the issues separately. She offered the example of the Economic and Financial Council (ECOFIN) plans to impose a visa ban and economic restrictions that go beyond the scope of UN Resolution 1737 on February 19, which will probably prompt Iran to withdraw from discussions with the EU.

[5](#). (C) AFGHANISTAN - Portugal is not in a position to contribute to the EU's police training mission in Afghanistan. According to Rocha, Portugal is concerned by the fact-finding mission report that indicated a serious lack of infrastructure on the ground. In keeping with what we heard from the Director for Disarmament and Security Affairs Joao Corte-Real (Ref C), Rocha noted that Portugal is committed to maintaining its current deployment to ISAF but does not have the resources to expand its commitment.

16. (C) SUDAN - As the EU funding for the mission in Darfur runs out, Rocha mentioned two possibilities for future funding. One option would be to disburse unused Asia Caribbean Pacific (ACP) funds to pay for the mission, but Rocha noted that the ACP Council will not have another meeting until May, and even if the Council approves, the funding is not sustainable. Another possibility would be to have nations give bilateral funding to Sudan; the UK, Denmark, and the Netherlands have reportedly offered to make such donations with the EU Commission's oversight. However, Rocha expressed concern that bilateral funding would be sending "good money after bad" given the current Sudanese government response.

17. (C) SOMALIA - Rocha reiterated her concerns about the deteriorating situation in Somalia and stated that, at this time, Portugal is attempting to avoid repeating the mistakes made in Sudan. She stressed that the Portuguese want to see a full proposal and a realistic timeline for assistance projects from the African Union before releasing any funds for these humanitarian efforts.  
Hoffman